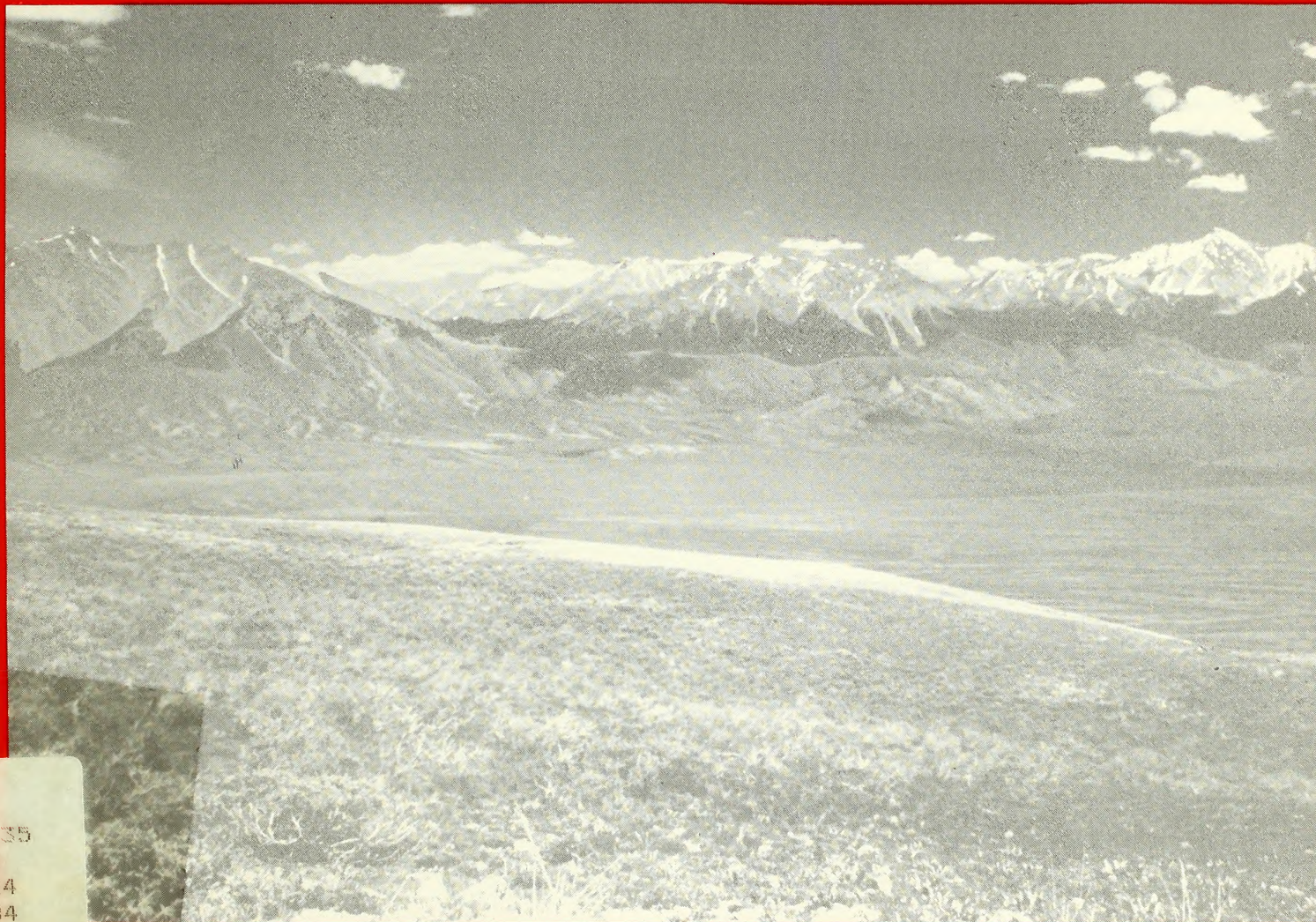


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MACKAY LAND USE DECISIONS SUMMARY AND RANGELAND PROGRAM SUMMARY

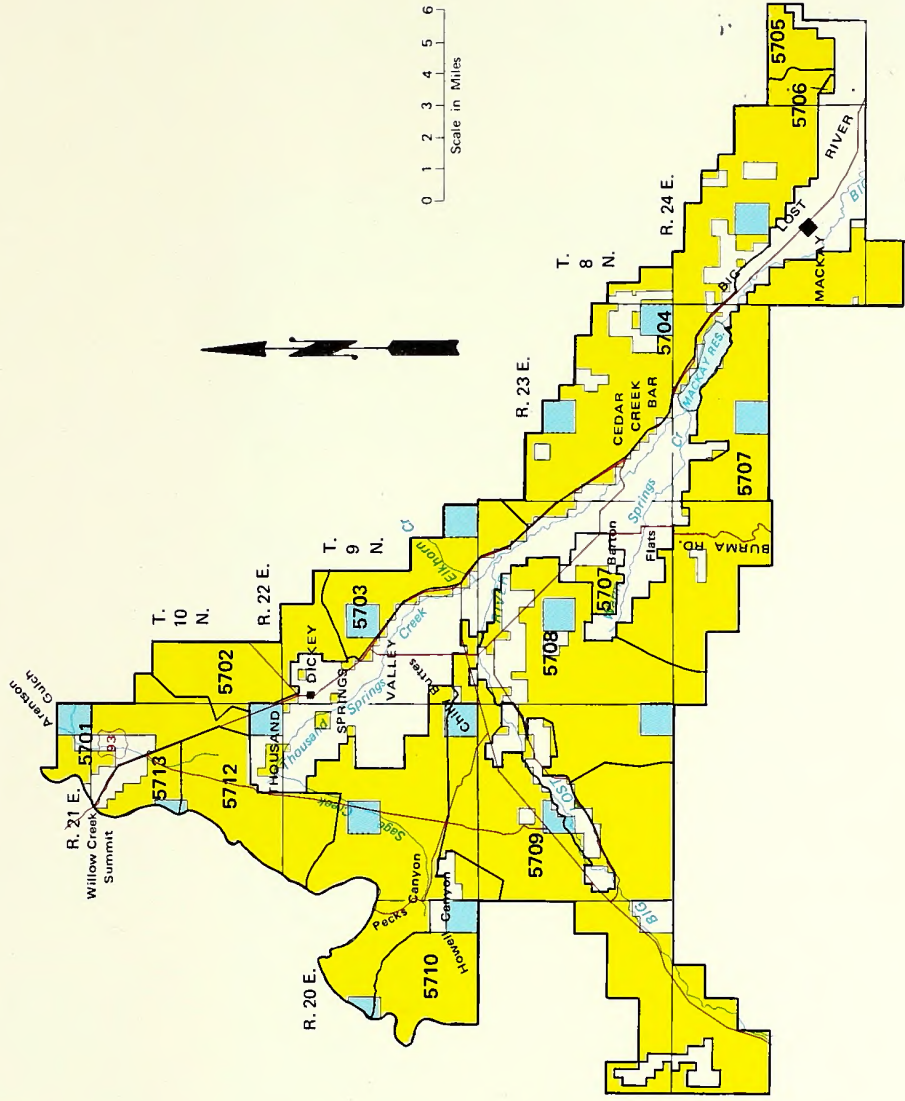


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Salmon District, Idaho
March, 1984



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MACKAY PLANNING UNIT



KEY TO ALLOTMENTS

- 5701 Arentson Gulch
- 5702 Dickey
- 5703 Wiskey Springs
- 5704 Mackay
- 5705 Asay
- 5706 Woodbury
- 5707 Copper Basin
- 5708 Boone Creek
- 5709 Wildhorse
- 5710 Sage Creek
- 5712 Thousand Springs
- 5713 Willow Creek

- Public Lands.....
- State Lands.....
- Patented Lands.....

- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT BOUNDARY.....
- COUNTY BOUNDARY.....
- PLANNING UNIT BOUNDARY.....
- U.S.F.S., I.N.E.L. & NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY.....
- TOWNSHIP LINE.....
- HIGHWAY / ROAD.....
- RIVER 6/ STREAM.....
- TOWNS.....

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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, land, wildlife, mineral, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial Affairs are also concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources."

The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will makes its full contribution to a better United States — now and in the future.

The Bureau of Land Management, an agency in the Department of the Interior, administers programs for conservation and development of the public lands and resources. In Idaho, there are six Bureau of Land Management districts with offices in Salmon, Boise, Burley, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Falls, and Shoshone.

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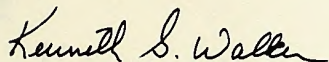
Letter From The District Manager

This brochure summarizes the land use decisions made for the Mackay Unit Management Framework Plan (MFP) and Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Because of the large number and complexity of the land use decisions, it is not possible to present them in total. This document highlights the most significant decisions in each resource program and the Rangeland Program Summary and Record of Decision for the Grazing EIS.

You may review the Mackay plan, EIS, and all related documents at the Salmon District Office. My staff and I are available to discuss the decisions and help you review the documents. We expect to revise this plan from time to time to meet the public needs and to cope with changing local and national conditions. Major revisions will be done with full public participation. The Rangeland Summary will be updated annually to keep the public informed of progress in the range program and future management decisions.

Our sincere appreciation is extended to everyone who assisted in this effort. The contributions made through public involvement have improved the quality of the plan and the decisions. We look forward to working with you again in the future.



Kenneth G. Walker
District Manager
Salmon District

March, 1984

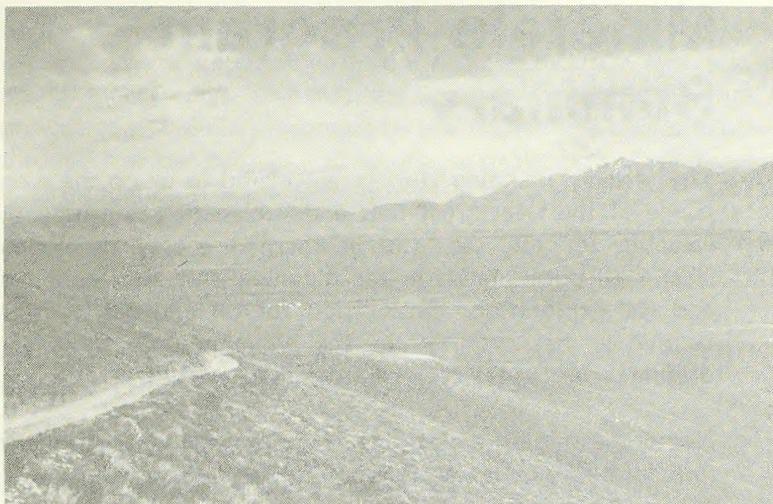
General Description

The Mackay Planning Unit is located within the Challis Resource Area of the Salmon District and is entirely within Custer County. The unit encompasses lands within the upper Big Lost River drainage. The northern boundary is Willow Creek Summit and the ridge forming the watershed division between the Big Lost and Salmon Rivers. The southernmost portion of the unit is located three miles south of Mackay on the boundary between the Salmon District and Idaho Falls District. The unit is bordered by the Challis National Forest on the east and west perimeters.

One major highway, U.S. 93, bisects the unit in a northwesterly direction. A State secondary road branches off from U.S. 93 at Elkhorn Creek and connects with State Highway 75 at Sun Valley. This road is generally referred to as the Trail Creek Highway.

Within the Mackay Unit, the BLM administers 132,540 acres of public lands, the State of Idaho administers 8,603 acres, and 48,633 acres are in private ownership. The public lands are concentrated on the plains and foothills above the private lands that border the Big Lost River and Thousand Springs Stream. Elevations vary from 5,780 feet just south of Mackay to 10,100 feet at Jerry Peak. Lands adjacent to the unit are, for the most part, managed by the Challis National Forest, although the Challis Unit of the BLM forms the northwestern boundary for several miles.

Public lands within the unit are used primarily for livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, recreation, timber production, and minerals. The major source of income and employment in the vicinity is from livestock production.



The Big Lost River Valley from Burma Road. Lands administered by BLM are located throughout the valley floor and foothills.

Major Issues and Problems

Major issues and problems result from present and potential land use conflicts, the unavoidable environmental impacts of resource development, and social and economic impacts on local communities and lifestyles.

Issues and problems were identified through the BLM's planning and EIS process, both of which involved public participation. The following section, Significant Management Decisions, describes these issues and problems for each resource.

Significant Management Decisions

The productive capability of the land itself coupled with public concerns for resource use and protection are key factors in BLM decision-making. Accordingly, geology, climate, soils, topography, wildlife, vegetation, and public concerns were major considerations in the Mackay Unit land use decisions.

Land Program Summary

The BLM Salmon District has surface management of about 70 percent of the total Mackay land area. Primary uses which are dealt with in the lands program are: (1) urban and suburban; (2) agricultural; (3) public purpose areas; (4) utility systems; and (5) communication sites. Casework involves processing Desert Land Entry applications, reviewing withdrawals, reviewing classifications, issuing rights-of-way, and processing agricultural trespass cases, public land sales, and exchanges.

LANDS DECISIONS

LANDS IDENTIFIED AS SUITABLE FOR DISPOSAL WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLIC SALE, EXCHANGE, AGRICULTURAL ENTRY, ETC.

Disposing of certain isolated or difficult-to-manage portions of land provides better comprehensive management and helps meet the needs of the public and local government for use of those lands. This also provides for agricultural expansion without major conflicts with other resources.

UTILITY AND TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC, AND PRIVATE RIGHTS-OF-WAY, COMMUNICATION SITES, DITCH AND PIPELINE RIGHTS-OF-WAY WILL BE CONSIDERED.

The need for rights-of-way and communication sites is increasing as the population increases in the area. Allowing appropriate rights-of-way will help provide for orderly growth.

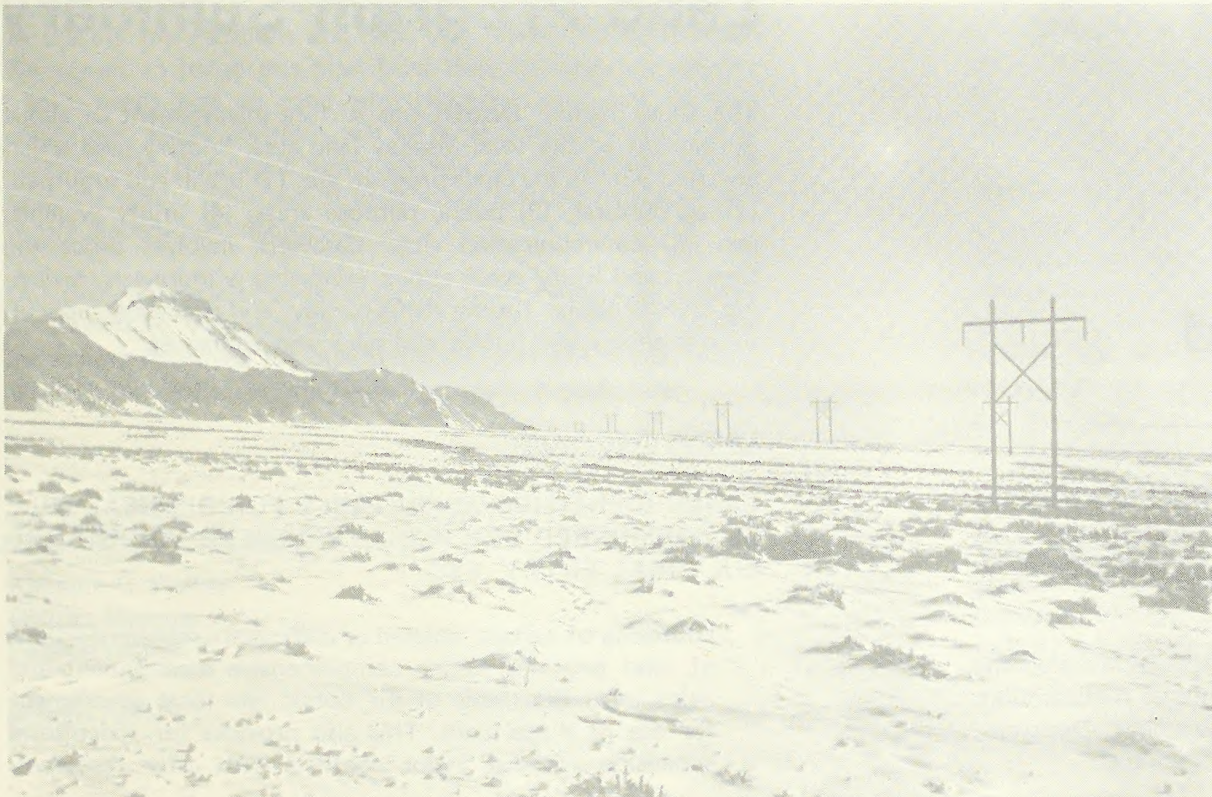
TRESPASS STRUCTURES AND UNAUTHORIZED DUMP-SITES ON PUBLIC LANDS WILL BE REMOVED.

Removal of trespass structures and unauthorized dumpsites will improve visual quality and reduce health hazards on public lands.

Minerals Program Summary

The Mackay Planning Unit is considered to be on the western fringe of the Overthrust Belt and is classified as prospectively valuable for oil, gas, and geothermal energy development. Nearly all public lands in the planning unit are leased for oil and gas exploration. Exploration for oil and gas by seismic techniques has occurred in the planning unit; however, no drilling projects have resulted from these studies.

Numerous mining claims are found throughout the planning unit for heavy metals such as gold, silver, copper, lead, iron, and



Land and realty actions include processing rights-of-way for power transmission lines. The 230 KV line from Moore to Clayton extends across the Mackay Valley.

barite. Interest in these historic mining areas has found renewed life with several exploratory drilling projects recently. However, no producing mines have resulted. Several mineral material sites provide road building materials to public highway departments through free use permits and to private projects through direct sales throughout the planning unit.

MINERALS DECISIONS

PUBLIC LANDS WILL BE OPEN TO MINERAL ENTRY UNDER THE 1872 MINING LAW EXCEPT:

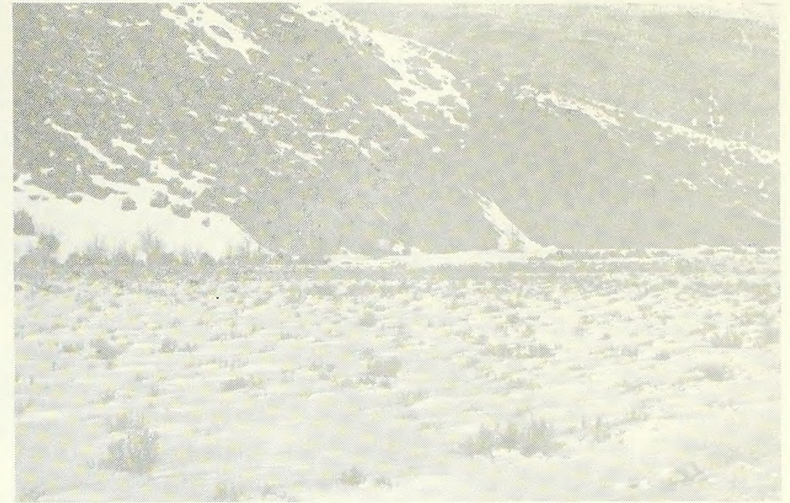
1. LANDS ALREADY WITHDRAWN FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES ADJACENT TO MACKAY RESERVOIR.

The recreation site has developments which have a continued value to the public.

2. LANDS IDENTIFIED TO BE WITHDRAWN IN THE THOUSAND SPRINGS AREA FOR WATERFOWL AND FISHERIES HABITAT PROTECTION.

The Thousand Springs area is a unique wildlife habitat area that should be protected from development.

The BLM has little discretion involving mineral entry under the 1872 Mining Law, but provisions for protecting other resource values can be made. The Wilderness Study Areas in this planning unit may have mineral values and should remain open to exploration. Wilderness Interim Management Policy Guidelines and Surface Management Regulations will provide sufficient protection to these areas. No lands can be withdrawn from mineral entry until the Secretary of the Interior initiates withdrawal procedures, and can be closed only upon action by the Secretary of the Interior.



Shale pits are available for use by the local community.

THE ENTIRE PLANNING UNIT WILL BE LEFT OPEN FOR MINERAL LEASING (OIL, GAS, AND GEOTHERMAL).

Stipulations on surface occupancy and restricted time will be used to protect appropriate values.

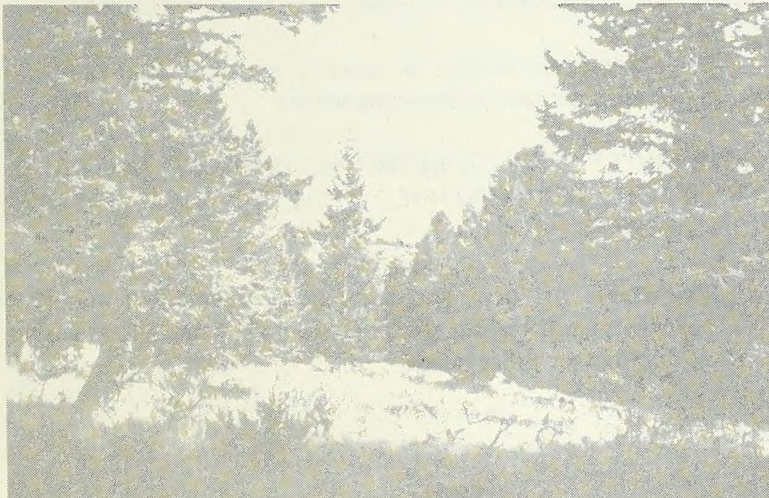
COMMUNITY PITS AND/OR INDIVIDUAL MATERIAL SITES WILL BE IDENTIFIED THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING UNIT.

The needs of local and state governments for materials have increased during the past several years. This decision will help meet those needs.

Forestry Program Summary

There are 6,850 acres of forested land within the planning unit, of which 2,850 acres are classified as commercial. Most of this commercial timber can be found in the northwest portion of the planning unit, in the Sawmill Canyon, Pecks Canyon, and Sage Creek areas. Aspect, precipitation, elevation, and slope are the main environmental factors affecting the establishment and growth of these commercial stands. Douglas-fir is by far the predominant timber species, and can be found in either pure stands or mixed stands with five other associated species. Due to the low amount of precipitation, the majority of these stands occupy a dry habitat type with a low to moderate timber productivity potential.

There were two commercial harvests during the early 1970s within the planning unit that removed over 1,600 MBF of timber. Prior to these commercial harvests, past use was limited to harvesting timber for nearby ranchers and timbers for local



Most of the approximately 2,850 acres of commercial forest land is located at the higher elevations on north-facing slopes.

miners. In the last few years, demand for firewood for home heating has increased. According to the current five-year timber sale plan, no harvests are planned. Future harvests will concentrate on improving the overall quality of these stands. Almost 50 percent of the commercial stands have some sort of management problems, with dwarf mistletoe being by far the most serious.

FOREST PRODUCTS DECISIONS

INTENSIVELY MANAGE THE PRODUCTIVE FOREST LANDS FOR TIMBER PRODUCTION ON A SUSTAINED YIELD BASIS TO PROVIDE FOR MAXIMUM VOLUME BASED ON ALLOWABLE CUT PROCEDURES. HARVEST AN AVERAGE OF 72 MBF OF TIMBER PER YEAR. ANY TIMBER HARVESTING WILL BE CLOSELY COORDINATED TO MINIMIZE IMPACT UPON WILDLIFE AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON TIMBER SALE PURCHASES. PRACTICES WILL FOLLOW THE IDAHO FOREST PROTECTION ACT.

The forest lands in this unit are in need of intensive management. Dwarf mistletoe is a serious disease problem in the area. There are several stands which are in need of thinnings. Wildlife utilize these timbered areas. Close coordination with the wildlife biologist on time and layout will reduce impacts to wildlife. No timber harvesting will occur in Wilderness Study Areas.

WOODLAND PRODUCTS, FIREWOOD, CHRISTMAS TREES, AND POSTS AND POLES WILL BE SOLD ON A VEGETATIVE PERMIT BASIS. THESE SALES WILL BE EVALUATED ON AN INDIVIDUAL CASE BASIS.

The demand for forest products has been increasing steadily. The forest products can be used on a managed basis and can meet some of the public needs. These needs are mainly local in nature, due to the distance to the larger population centers and the limited quantities of produce.

A cooperative effort by BLM, private landowners, and other Federal and State agencies has led to construction of streambank stabilizing gabions.



Watershed Program Summary

Soil types in the area vary greatly depending upon the dominant geologic parent materials. Glacial, fluvial, and alluvial deposits occur on the bottom of all major stream valleys. Five major soil groupings have been identified which resulted from combining 61 soil mapping units.

Existing water quality is generally excellent. Primary uses of the surface waters are domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold water fisheries habitat, waterfowl habitat, and recreation.

Major nonpoint pollution sources are natural geomorphic and man-caused. The man-caused problems usually result from land-based activities which alter the natural hydraulic processes of the land surface and accelerate the effects of weathering and erosion.

A "208" water quality plan is being implemented by the BLM in conjunction with private landowners and other Federal and State agencies. The plan will reduce streambank erosion along the Big Lost River resulting in improved water quality in the river and in Mackay Reservoir.

Wildlife Program Summary

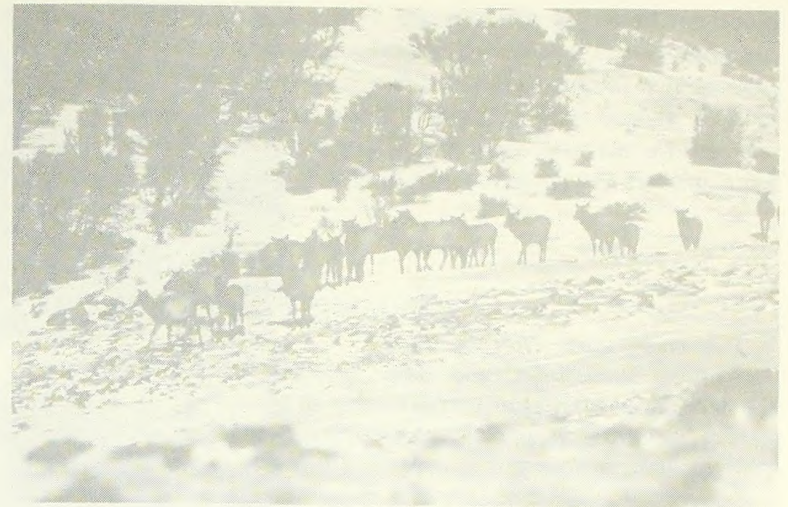
The Mackay Unit provides habitat for 72 species of mammals, 284 species of birds, and 15 species of amphibians and reptiles. The unit provides crucial winter habitat for 400 elk, 1,500 mule deer, and 2,000 antelope. Nearly 1,000 antelope continue to use the unit as spring, summer, and fall range. Sage grouse, blue grouse, chukar, and hungarian partridge are upland species utilizing the unit on a year-long basis.

Sightings of threatened and endangered species include bald eagles and American peregrine falcons. Long-billed curlews are a state sensitive species which nest in the unit.

The Thousand Springs—Whiskey Springs wetlands provide habitat for an estimated 90 species of birds, including 20 species of shorebirds, 27 species of waterfowl, 28 species of passerines, 9 species of raptors, and 6 other species. Possibly 62 of these species nest in the marsh.



The Thousand Springs marsh area is important habitat for ducks, geese, and trout.



The Willow Creek Summit area provides crucial elk habitat during the winter months.

The Thousand Springs—Whiskey Springs marsh and the Big Lost River are both important fisheries. Kokanee salmon, rainbow trout, and brook trout are the species most commonly sought by fishermen.

WILDLIFE DECISIONS

PROVIDE ADEQUATE HIGH QUALITY, QUANTITY, AND DIVERSITY OF HABITATS FOR A MAXIMUM DIVERSITY OF ALL WILDLIFE SPECIES. THIS WILL BE DONE BY: (1) PROVIDING WATER AT ALL RANGE WATER DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN JUNE 15 AND OCTOBER 1; (2) DEVELOPING SMALL WET MEADOWS ALONG WATER DEVELOPMENTS; (3) ENHANCING RIPARIAN HABITATS; (4) CONDUCTING VEGETATION MANIPULATIONS; AND (5) UPGRADING OLD FENCES AND CONSTRUCTING NEW FENCES TO MEET SPECIFICATIONS OF WILDLIFE SPECIES USING THE AREA.

Portions of the Mackay Unit have been made available to wildlife due to water developments, but problems arise when those developments are turned off during dry periods. Fences, manipulations, and water developments all affect wildlife. Proper designs ensure that maximum benefits to wildlife are realized.

ACQUIRING, THROUGH EXCHANGE, LANDS CRUCIAL TO WILDLIFE USE OF KEY AREAS.

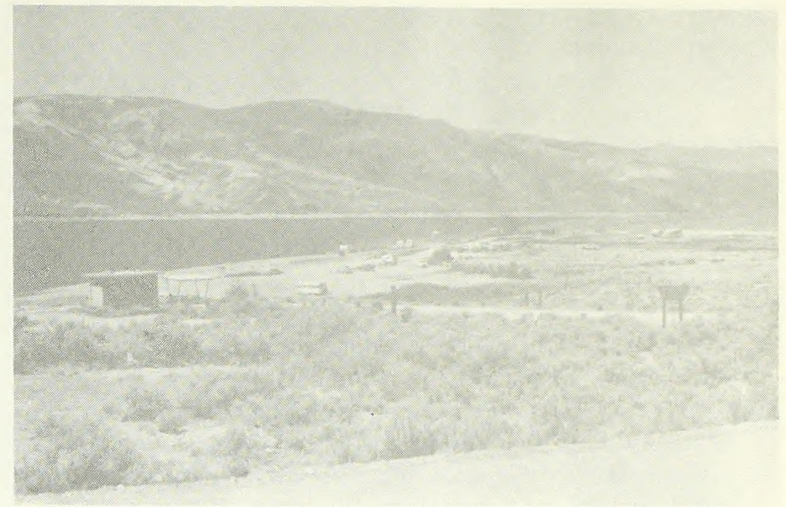
Efforts will be made to acquire, through exchange, some private lands on elk crucial winter range and in the Thousand Springs marsh to ensure continued and improved wildlife values in those areas.

Recreation Program Summary

The Mackay Planning Unit provides a wide array of recreation opportunities for fishing, hunting, camping, and off-road vehicle (ORV) use. Fishing in Mackay Reservoir, the Big Lost River, Thousand Springs, and Whiskey Springs are primary activities to many people. Also of great importance are the opportunities to hunt big game, upland game birds, and waterfowl. Part of the planning unit has been designated by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game as open for a late season (blackpowder only) deer hunt.

Mackay Reservoir Recreation Site is the largest developed site in the planning unit and in the Salmon District. It received nearly 18,000 recreation visits during the summer of 1982 alone, with most visitors (74 percent) being from Idaho. Fishing and camping are, of course, popular activities, but the reservoir is also important for its other water-oriented recreation opportunities such as powerboating, water skiing, and swimming.

The Jerry Peak Wilderness Study Area (WSA) 46-14 lies partly within the Mackay Planning Unit.



Use of the Mackay Reservoir campground and boat docks is increasing yearly.

RECREATION DECISIONS

MAINTAIN THE EXISTING MAJOR DEVELOPED RECREATION SITE AT MACKAY RESERVOIR AND DEVELOP A TRAILHEAD TO MT. BORAH.

These sites are needed to aid in the management of recreationists using these areas.

CLOSE ALL AREAS ON OR WITHIN ONE MILE OF CRITICAL WILDLIFE WINTER RANGES TO ORGANIZED RECREATION ACTIVITIES AS FOLLOWS: ANTELOPE – NOVEMBER 15 TO APRIL 15; ELK AND MULE DEER – DECEMBER 1 TO APRIL 30.

This includes, but is not limited to, organized snowmobile and cross-country ski events.

OPEN TO UNRESTRICTED OFF-ROAD VEHICLE USE THE ENTIRE MACKAY PLANNING UNIT WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS: (1) JERRY PEAK WSA – ORVs LIMITED TO EXISTING ROADS AND TRAILS; (2) WILLOW CREEK SUMMIT ELK CRITICAL WINTER RANGE – CLOSED TO ALL VEHICLES FROM DECEMBER 1 TO APRIL 30; AND (3) THOSE CRITICAL WINTER RANGES AS LISTED ABOVE – CLOSED TO ALL ORGANIZED MOTORIZED RECREATION ACTIVITIES.

These designations will help reduce stress to wintering herds of big game animals in the planning unit. Such stress can increase mortality and decrease the probability of successful reproduction of wildlife. The Jerry Peak WSA designation is in accordance with the BLM's "Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review" (1979).

MANAGE ALL PUBLIC LANDS TO PROTECT, MAINTAIN, OR ENHANCE THE VISUAL RESOURCE VALUES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (VRM) SYSTEM. VRM CLASSES WILL BE DESIGNATED FOR THE MACKAY PLANNING UNIT AS FOLLOWS:

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>ACREAGE</u>
I*	8,568
II	15,980
III	21,001
IV	86,951
V	40
	<hr/>
	132,540

*Temporary Designation Until Wilderness Study Is Completed.

Visual resource values have been recognized as an important element of the human environment. Care will be given to minimize visual intrusions to the extent practical.

RECOMMEND THAT PORTION OF JERRY PEAK WSA 46-14 THAT LIES IN THE MACKAY PLANNING UNIT FOR WILDERNESS.

This area is being studied via the "Challis Wilderness Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement," in which the above recommendation will be forwarded to Congress for the final decision. If Congress does not designate this area as wilderness, then it will be managed for a variety of multiple uses which could include timber harvest, mineral exploration and development, and ORV use. More range improvement projects could be developed and timber sales could be allowed.

Rangeland Program Summary

This section summarizes the rangeland management decisions for the Mackay Planning Unit based on multiple use planning and the grazing environmental impact statement (EIS). This summary conforms with Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 4160.1-1(a), Grazing Administration and Trespass on Public Lands, and meets the record of decision requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

BACKGROUND

The Mackay Planning Unit contains 12 grazing allotments used by 31 livestock permittees. Animal unit months (AUMs) of use are 98 percent cattle (8,566 AUMs) and 2 percent horses (213 AUMs). Three allotments are grazed by both horses and cattle. Active grazing preference is 8,779 AUMs, with a five-year average use of 8,342 AUMs.

Livestock grazing is permitted throughout the Mackay Unit. These cattle are grazing on the Arentson Gulch Allotment.



Rangeland condition is 63 percent good, 33 percent fair, and 4 percent poor. Vegetation types are 80 percent sagebrush/grassland, 6 percent woodland, 7 percent rock and talus, and 7 percent seeded.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Many formal and informal contacts were made from 1980 through 1982 during the planning process, and some constructive comments were received. Information and concerns identified by the public were included in the draft grazing EIS released in April, 1983. Significant additional public comments were received on that draft EIS which led to several changes in the

final EIS released in September, 1983. The BLM will continue to seek out public concerns as decisions are implemented or for any major changes in decisions.

Consultation and coordination with affected parties has been an integral part of this decision-making process, and will be continued through issuance of final decisions and implementation thereof. Public comments on this Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) will be accepted until June 30, 1984. From July 1, 1984, to September 30, 1984, grazing agreements will be completed with all affected licensees on all allotments within the Mackay Unit. During that time, if any need for major changes are identified through public comment or subsequent consultation and coordination, an updated RPS will be prepared.

If an agreement on grazing use cannot be reached with the affected licensee(s) after consultation and coordination, then a proposed decision will be issued to the licensee(s) involved. Anyone who is adversely affected by a proposed decision may protest that decision in person or in writing to the Authorized Officer within 15 days after receipt of the proposed decision. In the absence of a protest, the proposed decision becomes the final decision of the Authorized Officer without further notice.

Upon receipt of a timely protest, the Authorized Officer shall reconsider the proposed decision in light of the protestant's statement of reasons for protest and in light of other information pertinent to the case. At the conclusion of the protest review, a final decision will be issued. A period of 30 days after receipt of the final decision is provided for filing an appeal (Reference 43 CFR Support 4160.1-2; 4160.2; and 4160.3).

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE – ALTERNATIVE E

When the draft EIS was prepared, Alternative A was the "Preferred Alternative." As a result of public comment on that draft, forage and cover for wildlife surfaced as a major issue and prompted the development of Alternative E, which has been selected as the BLM's preferred alternative. However, Alternative E is identical to Alternative A for all 12 of the allotments in the Mackay Unit because the wildlife concerns centered on some allotments in the Big Lost portion of the Big Lost–Mackay Grazing Draft. As a consequence, major changes in amount of fencing and vegetative manipulation for the Big Lost portion resulted in Alternative E. The discussion which follows refers only to the Mackay Unit. A Rangeland Program Summary for the Big Lost Unit will be issued later by the Idaho Falls District.

Under the preferred alternative, the 8,393 AUMs of livestock use represent a 1 percent increase over the five-year average,

and a 6 percent increase from the active preference. After 15 years, grazing use will be increased to 8,909 AUMs, which is a 7 percent increase over the five-year average and only 1 percent less than the preference. Vegetation will improve in quality and quantity. Range condition will be improved where poor or fair conditions currently exist and good condition range will be maintained.

Range improvements will include 9 1/2 miles of pipeline, one mile of fence, and 3,030 acres of vegetative manipulation. Project cost is \$39,900 for pipeline, \$4,000 for fences, and \$13,000 for vegetative manipulation. The total cost for improvements is \$56,900, pending funding. The range improvements proposed under this alternative are considered to be needed for proper livestock management and will receive priority for implementation.

Impact Summary

Under this alternative, soil erosion will be reduced and watershed conditions will show no appreciable change from current trends.

Wildlife habitat will be expected to improve. Some of the riparian areas will improve while other riparian zones will be unaffected.

Rancher income will be slightly increased.

ALTERNATIVE A

Same as Alternative E.

ALTERNATIVE B – NO ACTION

The initial stocking level would be the same as the five-year average level of grazing use for livestock at 8,342 AUMs. Permittees could increase livestock use up to their total preference which is 8,999 AUMs for the EIS area. Range improvements would only be constructed where needed to maintain livestock grazing at the current level as funds were available. The level of range improvements would not be expected to exceed 25 percent of those identified for Alternative E.

Impact Summary

Wildlife habitat would remain unchanged under this alternative along with soil erosion and watershed conditions.

Rancher income would not change as a result of this alternative.

ALTERNATIVE C – DECREASED LIVESTOCK USE

This alternative would improve range condition, ensure long-term productivity of the resources, and eventually increase the level of livestock grazing under a reduced level of funding. Expenditures for range improvement projects would be about 44 percent less than those for Alternative E. Reduction in livestock grazing would be made in some allotments to conform to carrying capacity, but no increases in use would occur.

Range improvements would include 7 1/2 miles of pipeline, 1/2 mile of fence, and 2,143 acres of vegetative manipulation. Project costs would be \$31,500 for pipeline, \$2,000 for fences, and \$7,000 for vegetative manipulation. The total cost for improvements would be \$40,500.

Impact Summary

Under this alternative, soil erosion would decline somewhat, but watershed conditions would essentially remain unchanged.

Wildlife habitat would be expected to decrease in quality. Riparian zones would continue an apparent downward trend in condition.

Rancher income would decrease initially, but would increase after 15 years.

ALTERNATIVE D – NO GRAZING

Livestock grazing would be discontinued under this alternative and no AUMs would be authorized. All forage in the unit would be reserved for other uses. No new range management projects or any livestock management facilities would be constructed.

Impact Summary

Vegetation would increase and range condition would improve.

Soil erosion and watershed conditions would show significant improvement.

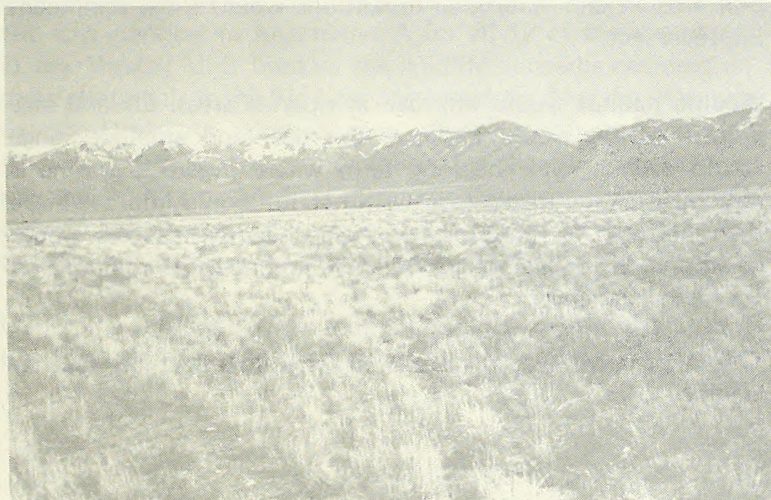
Wildlife habitat would improve in riparian areas. Elk and sage grouse habitat would improve, but deer and antelope range would decline over the long term where livestock grazing is now maintaining shrub cover. Elk habitat would improve more than habitat for other species. Reproductive success would be improved for all species due to elimination of competition for forage and cover.

This alternative would have a devastating effect on rancher income.

RANGELAND DECISIONS

THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF ALTERNATIVE E WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.

The impacts of all elements in the decision were analyzed and documented in the draft and final Big Lost–Mackay Grazing EISs. Alternative E was chosen over the original Proposed Action because of public comment and because it was more economically and environmentally acceptable. This Preferred Alternative provides a desirable balance between resource improvements, resource use, and economic and social conditions. Alternative E is the environmentally preferred alternative.



Implementation of Alternative E will include several new range improvements such as the Barton reseeding, which was completed in 1954.

8,393 AUMs WILL BE ALLOCATED FOR ACTIVE GRAZING BY LIVESTOCK AS DEPICTED ON TABLE 1.

Vegetation will be allocated to livestock and wildlife. Unallocated vegetation is available for watershed protection, aesthetics, and other non-consumptive uses. The initial allocation is based on consultation, coordination, and cooperation, and examination of existing condition and trend with reservations as needed for other values such as wildlife and watershed.

GRAZING SYSTEMS WILL BE DEVELOPED FOR THE ALLOTMENTS SHOWN ON TABLE 1.

The allotments are divided into three general categories: (1) those where management potential is limited due to size and topography and where limited economic or resource returns would be realized by implementing intensive management; (2) those that are currently under allotment management plans (AMPs) or where present management is generally adequate to meet the needs of the soil and vegetative resources; and (3) those that have the potential to respond with an economic return and/or significant range improvement through intensive management.

Actual grazing systems may vary depending on coordinated planning with the operators and other appropriate entities.

Monitoring

Studies and evaluations will follow implementation of each grazing system to determine if specific objectives are being met. These studies typically include compiling actual use, range trend, range/watershed condition, utilization, weather data, carrying capacity, and wildlife habitat monitoring. Where specific objectives are not being met, adjustments will be made. All practical means have been adopted to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the Preferred Alternative.

TABLE 1

ALLOTMENT SUMMARY

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Acres Public Land</u>	<u>Initial Livestock Stocking Rate (AUMs)</u>	<u>Grazing System</u>	<u>Kind of Livestock</u>
Arentson	6,131	448	Rest Rotation	Cattle
Asay	819	108	Seasonal	Cattle
Boone Creek	9,826	716	Rest Rotation	Cattle, Horses
Copper Basin	28,374	1,198	Rest Rotation	Cattle,
Dickey	5,333	570	Rest Rotation	Cattle
Mackay	17,191	1,267	Seasonal	Cattle, Horses
Sage Creek	5,996	1,023	Deferred	Cattle
Thousand Springs	6,424	881	Rest Rotation	Cattle
Whiskey Springs	5,539	250	Rest Rotation	Cattle
Wildhorse	24,642	1,781	Rest Rotation	Cattle, Horses
Willow Creek	1,439	121	Seasonal	Cattle
Woodbury	<u>80</u>	<u>30</u>	Seasonal	Cattle
TOTAL	111,794	8,393		

Environmental Overview

Lands

Social and economic factors are most often affected by lands decisions. Environmental impacts are usually minor.

Minerals

Most of the Mackay Unit is open to mineral entry under the General Mining Law. Little mineral activity is presently occurring which would impact the environment to any degree. Potential oil, gas, and geothermal development could impact the environment. Potential also exists for other mineral activity to develop which could impact the environment.

Forestry

Most forestry activity is designed to clean up the mistletoe-infested stands. Some short-term impacts will occur, but long-term results will provide for more vigorous tree stands which will benefit wildlife and visual quality.

Watershed

Environmentally acceptable management practices, mainly the implementation of grazing systems, will improve watershed conditions by correcting the imbalances of past use. Expected benefits are decreased soil erosion and improved vegetative cover.

Wildlife

Forage allocation to wildlife is sufficient to support present and projected numbers. The proposed wildlife activities would have very minimal environmental impacts.

Recreation

Minimal impacts are expected from recreation management decisions. Decisions generally favor environmental protection and present management. The control of surface-disturbing activities will preserve historic values, and the careful location of development will help maintain visual quality.

Range

Livestock forage decisions will maintain or improve vegetation. Improved range condition and forage production will benefit all activities that depend on a sustained yield of quality range-land vegetation. Maintaining a vigorous and healthy vegetative cover is a sound base for multiple use management of this resource.

Consultation and Coordination

Public review was very important in preparing the Big Lost–Mackay Grazing EIS and Mackay Management Framework Plan. Throughout the planning process, numerous Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as members of the general public, offered suggestions to improve the plan. The Challis Resource Area staff contacted representatives of these groups to ensure that planning efforts and management decisions did not conflict with the land use plans of other agencies. Many significant comments were submitted, and the Area Manager incorporated a substantial number of those comments in refining and reviewing the plan.

The Mackay Unit plan was coordinated with several specific planning efforts. County officials were consulted during plan development. Land use decisions conform with the land use and zoning requirements of Custer County.

The BLM rangeland management policy includes a goal to increase and encourage systematic cooperation, consultation, and coordination with rangeland users and owners of lands intermingled with the public lands. The policy is an integral part of the land use and grazing management decision-making process. The BLM used information gained from range users in the planning and EIS process for developing and refining the proposed decisions.

Consultation and coordination with the Challis National Forest will be used to coordinate allotment management plans (AMPs) as grazing decisions are further refined. During the development of AMPs, the range users will be directly involved, as well as other appropriate entities such as the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, Idaho Fish and Game Department, Idaho Department of Lands, and other agencies.

Management Actions

This plan will be implemented through on-the-ground actions. Some decisions will require more detailed planning before implementation.

Development projects are subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. An environmental assessment or Categorical Exclusion Report (CER) will be prepared for each specific action. If the impacts are unacceptable, the proposal may be modified or rejected.

Management decisions will be used in programming and budgeting for the annual work plan. Because on-the-ground actions depend on funding by Congress, it may be some time before some decisions can be implemented.

In response to changing resource conditions and management requirements, the plan and the decisions will be updated and revised as new information becomes available. The public will have opportunities to participate in the planning process when major revisions are made.

Glossary

Allotment Management Plan — A detailed plan for intensively managing and improving a specific grazing allotment.

Animal Unit Month (AUM) — The amount of forage needed to sustain the equivalent of 1 cow and calf under 6 months of age, 5 sheep, 4 deer, or 5.3 antelope for one month. An AUM is equal to 800 pounds of forage.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) — A document that analyzes the environmental impacts of a proposed action and several alternatives.

Grazing Preference — The maximum number of AUMs that are allowed to be grazed on public lands by a permittee or lessee. The grazing preference is attached to private lands owned or controlled by the permittee or lessee.

Grazing Systems — Methods used to vary the livestock use an allotment receives.

Deferred Rotation — The withholding of livestock grazing from an area until a certain stage of plant growth is reached.

Rest Rotation — The rotation of livestock use from one pasture of an allotment to another on a seasonal and/or yearly basis. By doing so, one or more of the pastures receives non-use (rest) during the year.

Seasonal — Livestock use that occurs repeatedly in the same area during the same season of each year.

Management Framework Plan (MFP) — The MFP is the BLM's land use plan. MFP Step 1 consists of sets of recommendations designed to maximize a single resource. MFP Step 2 considers conflicts in use and social, economic, and environmental impacts in sets of recommendations by resource for overall multiple use management. MFP Step 3, which considers all comments and experience gained through the EIS process, includes land use decisions for future multiple use management.

Planning Unit — A portion of a resource area for which inventories and land use plans are developed.

Riparian — Pertaining to or situated on the banks of a river, stream, or other body of water. Riparian vegetation is the vegetation found along a river, stream, or other body of water.

Section 3 Leases — A Section 3 lease refers to grazing administration on public lands under Section 3 of the Taylor Grazing Act for lands that were originally located within grazing districts.

Notes:

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